

ADDENDUM TO MSGIC's STRATEGIC PLAN

November, 1996

This document was prepared by the Maryland State Government Geographic Information Coordinating Committee (MSGIC). It is an addendum to MSGIC's 1993 Strategic Plan that has provided a shared vision of State geographic information systems development that is essential for planning, budgeting, implementation and applications development. Strategic planning provides a framework for MSGIC's actions and policies that brings together agencies with shared interests in the development, use and maintenance of geographic information and digital mapping systems serving Maryland, its jurisdictions and citizens. It represents a recognition that to advance the integration of GIS technologies and applications into State government agencies, and to enhance the benefits of geographic information for improved and efficient government decision making, a variety of issues and challenges must be addressed in a coordinated manner. The original strategic planning workshop of MSGIC was held June 23-24, 1993. It provided essential identification of, and concurrence on, organization, staffing, system integration, data quality standards and related issues to identify the principal activities and responsibilities presented in the Strategic Plan. A second strategic planning workshop was held on November 13, 1996. A committee met to review the original strategic plan and recommend changes. A work-group then convened to incorporate the recommendations. While much of the original plan remains unchanged, some topics are clarified and others have been revised. This process insures that MSGIC re-evaluates its goals and mission.

Strategic planning is a continuous process that provides MSGIC with a broad overview of specific goals and objectives for State geographic information system development. The 1993 Strategic Plan constitutes a current view of MSGIC's mission to coordinate State government GIS initiatives and activities, providing a macro-plan for detailed objectives and activity planning. The plan is the central mechanism for integrating committee and subcommittee actions without loss of perspective. It is also the principal mechanism for meeting changing circumstances and fostering a new model for cooperative initiatives. The initial strategic plan presumed that the process that brought it about will continue as MSGIC pursues its mission. This process is essential to the long-term viability of MSGIC.

The 1996 MSGIC strategic planning session met in an electronic classroom at the Maryland State Archives. Sixteen representatives from seven State Agencies were joined by representatives from the U.S. Geological Survey, MLOGIC (Maryland Local Government GIS Committee) and Towson State University. The previous plan was examined, ideas and input were recorded by teams at computers, and the moderator kept a running log of suggestions visible to all the participants. The workgroup then reviewed the revisions in the same electronic environment. The discussions were both retrospective and prospective. The most significant discussions addressed MSGIC's relationship to other GIS groups, a review of the goals and achievements, cost-sharing arrangements and new avenues for carrying out MSGIC's mission.

Several important consensus decisions were reached at the 1996 workshop. They include the following strategies:

- **Commitment to increased liaison activity** - MSGIC will retain its membership structure which is focused on Maryland State Government Agencies within the Executive Branch. However, it will increase its efforts to coordinate with the University System, local governments (through MLOGIC), and the Federal Government.
- **MSGIC will not create a more formal structure** - The original strategic plan recommended that the Committee create an increasingly formal structure for MSGIC and obtain a budget. It was agreed that MSGIC has functioned well as an all volunteer effort

and that the limited funding required to do MSGIC's work has been forthcoming from the agencies involved. It was also noted that creating a formal structure with a budget would put the committee in a position of being eliminated or unfunded by an act of the General Assembly. Therefore, the Committee decided that MSGIC should continue its informal methods which have proven very effective.

- **Data sharing (fee versus free)** - The Committee concluded on the topic of resource sharing vs. data sales that a philosophy of cooperation - "share what you can and sell what you must" - should continue without debating the respective policies of each State agency operating under the authority of State Government Article 10-901 through 905, inclusive.
- **MSGIC will maintain the existing committee structure** - The Committee agreed that the structure of MSGIC was still appropriate and that the subcommittees should have the authority to alter meeting schedules and meet cooperatively as required to accomplish the work of MSGIC.
- **Data and product development will be coordinated through the Technology Toolbox™** - The Committee discussed updates to the previously approved Base Maps considering the changes authorized by MSGIC since development of the first Strategic Plan. It was agreed that action should be delayed in favor of MSGIC's adoption of the Technology Toolbox™ and Business Partnership Plans which deal with base maps and thematic data.